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STATE
OF
FACTS
NOW IN DISCUSSION.

STATE OF FACTS, &c.

ON or about the 22d of October laſt, his Majeſty was ſtruck with a moſt dreadful diſtemper, which, without any previous known cauſe, has totally deprived him of underſtanding; and in that condition, without any ſort of abatement, or ſign whatſoever of recovery, he has continued ever ſince. It may pleaſe God to reſtore him to the uſe of his faculties; but he may continue in the ſame melancholy ſtate for ſeveral years. By this ſtroke, almoſt the whole body of Government is diſabled, and no part of that Government (except in a few inſtances) can act in our affairs, abroad or at home, in office or in Parliament, with any known legal authority. The whole Executive Adminiſtration, and the whole of the regular conſtitutional activity of both Houſes of Parliament is ſuſpended. In this ſituation, every good ſubject muſt naturally wiſh to return things, as ſpeedily as poſſible, into their regular courſe, and to provide ſome ſort of government to the country.

It was particularly incumbent on the Miniſters, from regard to the Public, and from a peculiar ſenſe of gratitude and duty to the King, to lay aſide, on this occaſion, all ſelfiſh views, all party feuds, animoſities, and

contentions for power; and to conciliate as many as poſſible, in the conſervation of the intereſts of the Royal Family, thus, by the hand of God, deprived of their natural head, father, and protector.

It was evident that ſome Regent muſt be appointed. The ſettlement of the Crown in the Houſe of Brunſwick, which, in the event of the King's death, fixes the ſucceſſion by law on the Prince of Wales, ſeemed alſo to point him out naturally as the proper perſon for exerciſing, during the ſuſpenſion of his father's authority, in the King's name, thoſe powers, which the law had fixed upon him to exerciſe one day in his own right.

A caſe of this kind, that is the caſe of a King alive yet under a ſort of temporary death, as to all public and private functions, with an Heir Apparent of full age, indeed of twenty-ſeven years of age, had never happened before, and of courſe, in a ſtate of things that was abſolutely new in our hiſtory, and for which no law whatſoever had made proviſion, ſome diverſity of ſpeculative opinion would naturally ariſe. The caſes of Regency, in all countries, have given riſe to ſome ſuch diſcuſſions. It is our duty to take care that they ſhould not produce that ill blood amongſt us, which has been ſo fatal at other times. All parties agreed that the Prince of Wales *ought* to be Regent; and it was agreed alſo, that without ſome judgment, recognition, approbation, or ſanction of both Houſes of Parliament, he could not poſſibly be put in poſſeſſion of this office.

This great practical point being decided, all real friends to the King, and friends to the peace of the country, were of opinion, that a proper middle term of agreement was found between the moſt oppoſite ſpeculative opinions.

His Majeſty's Miniſters unhappily entertained very different ſentiments. A Member in each of the Houſes had declared it as his opinion, that the Prince, under the qualifications above deſcribed, had a right to the Regency. Whether this opinion was well or ill founded, as it led to no practical concluſion, but to that on which all were agreed, and as nobody elſe could be ſuſpected of any deſire of offering a claim againſt him, it appeared of no ſort of moment.

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However, a Miniſter in the Houſe of Commons took up the matter with great apparent heat. He treated the above opinion as treaſon to the Conſtitution:—purſuing his doctrine to the utmoſt extreme, he maintained explicitly, that every individual in the community had, in point of right, an equal title to the Regency with the Prince of Wales.

The poſition in favour of the Prince, if wrong, led to no evil conſequences; the other doctrine, by opening a door to every pretender to a temporary enjoyment of the prerogatives of the Crown, tended directly to render the ſucceſſion uncertain, and to throw the country into the moſt violent convulſions.—From a Pretender to the occaſional enjoyment of the Crown, to a perpetual Pretender—there is but one ſtep.

The Duke of York, the ſecond Prince of the blood, a Prince of the greateſt hopes, in a modeſt, graceful, elegant, and moſt affecting ſpeech, beſought in perſon the Houſe of Lords to wave queſtions of this critical and delicate nature; and aſſured them, that the Prince never had made any claim of right whatſoever, but ſubmitted every right he had, in this or any other caſe, to the judgment and diſcretion of the Houſe of Lords, and of the Repreſentatives of the People; and he beſought them not to heap unneceſſary ſorrows on thoſe, who were already ſuffering under grievous afflictions.

The affecting ſight of the ſecond Prince of the blood, pleading for compaſſion to his family, and for the peace of the country, in this melancholy ſtate of his and their father, it was hoped would oblige the Miniſters to abandon their dangerous project, by which the Royal rights might be given over to all the miſchiefs of a conteſted election.

The Duke of Glouceſter, whoſe amiable manners, and whoſe ſweet and moderate temper, add endearment to the dignity of his ſituation, and the unoſtentatious integrity of his character, joined in the ſame requeſt. The Duke of Cumberland, a ſpirited and popular Prince, though he did not ſpeak, was there demonſtrating his concurrence with the other Princes. The whole royal family diſplayed an union, a public ſpirit, and a perfect freedom from all ſiniſter ambition, that perhaps has never at any time, or in any country,

been

been ſo eminently ſhewn by perſons in their exalted ſituation; the application, I had almoſt ſaid, ſupplication of the ſons and brothers of the King, were met with a cold ſtern denial from his ſervants, without the leaſt appearance of reſpect, regard, ſoftening, or indeed common civility. They adhered to the project of degrading the Royal Family, with more obſtinacy, and defended it with more vehemence than ever. Several gentlemen in the Houſe of Commons, known to be connected with no Party, and who never had been candidates for places, thought that this violent proceeding could be for no good purpoſe, and could produce no good effect. They never had heard that the ſpeeches of one or two Members of Parliament had called for a public, ſolemn, parliamentary declaration of law. They entreated that the queſtion ſhould not be agitated; they entreated in vain; and a reſolution was come to, by which the Royal Family, were put on a footing, as to the object in queſtion, with the loweſt man in the kingdom.

The declared purpoſe of this proceeding, was to put reſtrictions on the Prince, in the execution of his very arduous and difficult office. They related chiefly to the grant of offices. The reaſons were ſuch as never had been before aſſigned. It was ſoon ſeen where the grievance lay; perſonal (I had almoſt ſaid factious) motives were never ſo directly, or with leſs modeſty or moderation avowed. The Miniſter in the Houſe of Commons declared himſelf ſenſible that his ſcheme would make Government weak; and did, by no means deny, that a weak Government, was not only an uſeleſs, but a miſchievous one.

It is for our conſideration, whether the fundamental powers of Government are to be enlarged, or reſtrained, to ſerve the purpoſes of any man, or ſet of men; or whether the mere ſuſpicions of any politician, that the Prince means to conſider all his Majeſty's ſubjects as entitled to a ſhare in his protection and ſervice; and does not mean to confine himſelf to a certain cabal, is a valid and ſufficient reaſon for making a Parliamentary declaration againſt the claims of the Prince Regent, and the future ſucceſſor of the Monarchy, for the purpoſe of mutilating the authority of the

Crown,

Crown, and of rendering government, and conſequently his protection of us, impracticable.

That this declaration might not be fruitleſs, ſeeing that they could not debauch the honor and fidelity of any of the Royal Family, they contrived a ſcheme, by which they might ſet up any creature of their own, without the leaſt conſideration of the Prince, or any of his Family:—they came to a reſolution to frame bills, which ſhould have the force of laws, without any aſſent from the King, or any real Repreſentative of the Crown. There ſtood in their way to the execution of this deſign, a declaratory ſtatute, making it no leſs than a premunire to maintain that one, or both Houſes of Parliament, could make any acts or ordinances, without the conſent of the Crown.

The manner in which they mean to get rid of this Conſtitutional difficulty is worthy of remark. In virtue of their third reſolution, they propoſe, that a creature of their own, ſhall be by both Houſes appointed, without any conſent of the Prince, or any of the Royal Family, to uſe the King's name, without his will. They admit that, without the aſſent of the Crown, they cannot make law. Their declared purpoſe therefore is, to draw up a bill or bills, which are to paſs the two Houſes, and then to *order* the Lord Chancellor, or ſome other perſon, to affix the Great Seal to thoſe bills, which, then they will affirm, will have the real, effectual, and conſtitutional aſſent of the Crown. To this unconſtitutional Creature, ſo formed, they give no judgment or diſcretion whatſoever; no power of conſidering, adviſing, poſtponing, or refuſing their bills. He *muſt* paſs them in the King's name; and under that fiction, or rather forgery, there is not a right of the Crown, nor a part of your Conſtitution, which they may not alter at their pleaſure.

The free, deliberate negative of the Crown, is a ſacred part of our Conſtitution, not given for the perſonal purpoſes of kings, but like all the reſt, for the benefit of the people.

Moſt of the reaſons given for ſubſtituting a mock repreſentative of the Crown, and garbling the prerogative in this caſe, will hold equally in the

caſe

caſe of the Prince's ſucceſſion to the Crown. They may alter the whole ſucceſſion by this ſort of fiction, and ſhut out the whole Royal Family. Where are the limits, by which the uſe of ſuch a fiction is to be reſtrained?

They plead the precedent of the Revolution. If they want to make a Revolution, they are in the right ſo to do. It is for us to ſee that we have cauſe for ſuch an experiment.

The hereditary ſucceſſion in the Houſe of Hanover is ſo far from being againſt the principles of the Revolution, that it is part of the plan of it, without which the ſecurity to our liberties would not have been complete. A generous and feeling nation will ſeriouſly conſider, whether it be not ſomething monſtrous and unnatural, in a combination of the King's ſervants, whilſt he lies in a moſt ſevere malady, ſtricken by the hand of the Almighty, to take advantage of his helpleſs ſtate, to deſtroy the moſt ſacred and neceſſary prerogative of his Crown, to inſult and degrade his whole family, to weaken the means of their lawful ſucceſſion to the Crown, and to ſet up, without his conſent, or that of any one of the Royal Family, ſome creature to diſpoſe of every thing that belongs to him, under a pretence that, when he comes to the uſe of reaſon, he may have the trouble of diſpoſſeſſing ſome court placemen, or find half a dozen Peers made during his unhappy abſence of mind, whom he does not like, but whoſe faces he may never ſee. What would be thought in private life of ſuch a conduct, and of ſuch pretences? It would be thinking too meanly of our faculties to enlarge upon it.

FINIS.